

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Re: Commission Meeting September 6, 2011

Due to lack of quorum, the meeting began at 5:34pm. Meeting was then called to order at 5:55pm once quorum was reached.

I. Attendance:

Present: Marc Fasano, Lou Criscuolo, Maggie Jensen, Judith Meyers, Krista Polinsky.

Absent: Paul Kottage, Donna Malley, Jim Marshall.

Staff: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation  
Judy Amarone, Manager, Joyce C. Budrow Senior Center  
Lauren Montano, Director, Community Services Daycare Center  
Carla Riccio, Secretary

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

In the June 7, 2011 meeting minutes, the New Business topic of Child Abuse Awareness Week was discussed. Here it indicated that Marc Fasano was willing to further discuss how to carry out his ideas with Mr. Fasano. This should read that Marc Fasano was willing to further discuss details with Mr. Fontana.

Marc Fasano made a motion to accept the Minutes of June 7, 2011 as corrected, seconded by Judith Meyers.

III. Correspondence:

Mr. Swinkoski announced the appointment of new commissioner Christine Orris.

A note of thanks dated August 29, 2011 was received by the First Selectman via email from resident Carole Harris-Kerr, Ph.D. in regards to the wonderful support that was provided at the emergency shelter that was set up at North Haven High School during the hurricane. She thanked all of those who helped out *"making people feel safe and welcome with the hospitality of shelter, food and company."* Krista Polinsky read the note to the Commission.

IV. Director's Report:

Lauren Montano, Director, Community Services Daycare Center

Ms. Montano began her report with current enrollment numbers. *Pre School Program:* All 15 slots currently filled. Ms. Montano reported that there had been 7 openings, which had all been filled by children on the waitlist. Four children currently remain on waitlist.

*School Age Program:* All 30 slots currently filled. Ms. Montano reported there had been one opening, which also had been filled by a child on the waitlist. Four children also remain on this waitlist.

*Special Events:* Ms. Montano reported on the Summer Program which began June 7<sup>th</sup>. Summer field trips included two visits to Lighthouse Point Park, a trip to the Maritime Center in Norwalk, Brooksvale Park in Hamden, and the movies. The children visited the pool twice a week. Additionally, the Daytime Garden Club planted a garden with the preschoolers and came every two week to check the garden and work on activities using art, science and reading.

*Personnel, staff trainings and meetings:* Regarding personnel, Ms. Montano noted that a new Teacher Aide, Lauren D'Errico, had been hired to replace Amanda Astarita. Additionally, part-time Teacher's Aide, Shannon Flynn broke her ankle and will be out for a period of time. Substitutes will be filling in.

Additionally, Ms. Montano and Teacher's Aide Beverly Maiocco worked on a committee to develop a new Birth-Five Resource Guide through a Graustein Memorial Grant. A total of 2,400 guides were printed and will be made available in various locations in North Haven including, public buildings, real estate offices, doctors' and dentists' offices for distribution. Ms. Montano distributed copies to the commissioners. The guide will be updated annually.

Ms. Jensen asked Ms. Montano if the resource guide was available on the Town website. Ms. Montano responded that it is not currently on the Town site, but indicated that she will look into that idea.

Lastly, Ms. Montano reported that seven visits were set up for new families to the Daycare program. Ms. Montano is currently making plans for the annual fall field trip for the Preschoolers to Rose's Orchard, as well as staff development days.

Ms. Polinsky asked if Ms. Montano felt that the Daycare is able to accommodate the needs of the Town, to which she responded yes, but usually after a wait on the waiting list. As reported at previous meetings, Ms. Montano reiterated that there is not enough room available to expand, however the Daycare maximizes the use of the Recreation center in order to accommodate all the children's activities.

Ms. Montano reviewed the subsidies received by the Daycare Center. The Daycare is partially subsidized and receives a grant in the amount of \$266,890 through the State of Connecticut Department of Education, previously through the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services. Fees are also set by the Department of Education. The remaining monies to run the daycare come from parents' fees, Care 4 Kids and the Town of North Haven.

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Mr. Swinkoski provided a summary of hurricane relief efforts provided by the Town. The Fire Department gave out a total of 108 gallons of water to 13 families in need. The Recreation Center made their showers available to residents during the week following the hurricane and approximately 100 residents utilized the showers. Ms. Amarone elaborated on several details surrounding relief efforts conducted at the shelter set up at North Haven High School during the hurricane, as well as initiatives conducted through the Senior Center, which is explained in her report to follow.

Ms. Polinsky noted that with the loss of power for many, it was difficult for information to reach those without power. She suggested that other ways to get the information out to residents about these amenities be considered. Information had been provided on NHTV, News 8, the Town website, the newspaper as well as information handed out at the Town Hall.

Ms. Meyers asked Mr. Swinkoski how much money the hurricane cost the Town. Mr. Swinkoski responded that it was too early to tell as he is still waiting to receive information from every department.

Judy Amarone, Manager, Joyce C. Budrow Senior Center

Ms. Amarone provided an overview of efforts surrounding Hurricane Irene.

Ms. Amarone reported on various action steps that were taken prior to the hurricane including informing seniors of the shelter at the High School, informing seniors of safe food practices, rearranging the senior transportation schedule to meet the demands for those that needed to get food, medication or water. Additionally, the Senior Center contacted family members of frail seniors that attend the Center securing a safe house for them so they would not be alone. Senior center staff shopped for water and snacks prior to the storm preparing for after the storm for the Center.

Ms. Amarone called senior housing managers and gave information regarding where to go if one were to lose power. She also worked with Police Department and contacted elderly people that were listed as those that needed assistance if evacuated. Blankets and pillows were secured for the Shelter; buses were secured in the event a senior/handicapped resident requested transportation (3 school buses and 2 senior center buses). Snacks including cereal, juice, water and granola bars were secured by Town Hall were secured by the Town Hall. Residents were made comfortable and they were able to watch movies. Ms. Amarone received several words of praise and appreciation for the Town's preparedness for the storm.

After the storm, Ms. Amarone initiated a hot lunch for residents without power and served lunch. A total of 31 people were served. These were not regular members but those that contacted the Town Hall or the Center looking for information. Additionally, the Senior Center provided information to residents and senior housing managers and advocates such as Agency on Aging of South Central CT regarding cooling shelter, places to shower, and where to obtain water. Senior Center members who traditionally drive to the Center were contacted and transportation information was provided.

On a final note, Ms. Amarone indicated that the Senior Center like many buildings and homes in Town did not have power. However the Center was able to open and run for the entire week due to the generator that was purchased with the Grant renovation funds.

Ms. Meyers commented that it sounded like the response was successful, however wondered if Ms. Amarone had anything that she would do differently in the event such a situation was to happen again. The only item Ms. Amarone suggested was to perhaps have activities for children available for those people who brought children to the shelter.

*Personnel:* Ms. Amarone reported that a part time bus driver has finally been hired this new driver will begin on September 12, 2011. The addition of this part time bus driver will increase the medical rides to the VA Hospital in West Haven. Finally, with the expansion of services, drivers will now be wearing uniforms for easy identification (maroon shirts, khaki pants).

*New to the Center evenings this Fall:* "Taking Care of your Aging Parent without going Broke" Seminar as well as a Caregiver Support Group, presented by VNA Community Healthcare. Also "Tai Chi in Motion" classes (as a prevention program for seniors) led by a trained instructor and sponsored by the Town and VNA Community Healthcare.

*Interventions:* Ms. Amarone handled eight intervention requests over the summer in conjunction with the Counseling Center. To date there is only one open case. Ms. Amarone had a copy of the intervention form that the Fire and Police Departments use for the intervention if commissioners wished to view it.

*Joyce C. Budrow Code of Conduct:* Ms. Amarone developed a Code of Conduct. This document was reviewed by the Commission on Aging Developed prior to being printed and post in the monthly newsletter "Senior Happenings". Upon reading the Code of Conduct, members were asked to sign and return the document. Ms. Amarone explained that the code of conduct was developed primarily in response to members' hygiene issues, not due to poor behavior.

*Old Business: Child Abuse Prevention Week:* In addition to the support services that are available through the Counseling Services in the Department, Mr. Swinkoski reported that guest speaker Rita Pelaggi, LCSW, Area Director for Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be speaking regarding Child Abuse at the September 7<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectman meeting. No further information was provided as to if and when Child Abuse Prevention Week will officially be observed in the Town.

Mr. Fasano commented that if the Board of Selectman have something that they wish to go forward with, then the week would be better suited during the month of April, which is National Child Abuse Awareness month, as various events could be planned to piggyback off of the national campaign. Some of Mr. Fasano's ideas included a moment of silence and a blue ribbon campaign.

He noted that this would allow time for a needs assessment of the Town to be performed, to have a liaison with the Board of Education to determine what programming the schools are doing as to not overstep any boundaries. Additionally he suggested that outreach could be done to the Wheeler Clinic and the Connecticut Children's Trust Fund as far as providing training. Mr. Fasano will send the ideas that he came up with to the Selectmen for their review.

*Old Business: Demographics of the Counseling Center:* At the June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, the question was raised regarding the exact demographics of the client base being served by the Counseling Center. Program Director Maggie Goodwin, LCSW who had presented indicated that she would work on gathering this information for the commission. Meyers asked if the information had been available yet. Mr. Swinkoski will get this information from Ms. Goodwin for the next meeting.

## V. Finance Report:

Mr. Swinkoski began by reviewing the YTD snapshot of the Emergency Fund, followed by the Outreach Fund.

*Emergency Fund (Fund 204)* as of 8/31/2011:

YTD expenditures - \$500.00

YTD Donations - \$62.00

*Outreach Fund (Fund 304)* as of 8/31/2011: \$375.00 was taken in, however they are monies originally disbursed from the Outreach Fund that were intended for the Board of Education to award summer school scholarships. The Board of Education did not award the scholarships and returned these monies to the fund.

*Project Graduation:* At the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, Mr. Marshall asked Mr. Swinkoski how much money would need to be raised to keep Project Graduation sustainable. Mr. Swinkoski reviewed the figures and presented them to the Commission.

According to Mr. Swinkoski, for the 2011 Project Graduation:

*\$16,661 - Revenue* (ticket sales, donations):

*\$21,984 - Expenses* (Quassy -\$16,284, \$5,700 in other expenses)

*Ran a net loss of roughly \$5,400.* The loss was absorbed by the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) Grant, so ultimately it broke even

In light of the high cost of Quassy, Mr. Fasano asked if other potential sites for Project Graduation have been considered in attempt to find a location that is less expensive. Mr. Fasano shared his knowledge on what other schools have done, which have kept Project Graduation at the High School and providing activities there for the students as an example.

Mr. Swinkoski will ask Nancy Leddy to attend the next meeting to provide her historical perspective and insight and have a discussion with the commission about this annual event.

Budget reports were reviewed by the Commission (reports ending August 2011).

*Community Services:* 2011 YTD snapshot of expenditures:

14.7% of budget expended YTD. Roughly \$60,000 spent to date.

*Welfare:* 2011 YTD snapshot of expenditures (eviction related expenses):  
11.9 % of budget expended YTD. \$357 spent to date.

*Senior Center:* 2011 YTD snapshot of expenditures:  
15.6 % of budget expended YTD. \$39,351 spent to date.

*Daycare:* 2011 YTD snapshot (through August 2011): Currently \$4,848.01

Mr. Swinkoski explained to the Commission that the Daycare grant runs on a calendar year. He illustrated the detail of the report provided. "DC23A" ran January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010. If all expenses were charged to it (healthcare, benefits), the year ended with a \$44,750 deficit, which was subsidized by the Town. "DC23B" runs January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011.

#### VI. Public Participation:

None.

#### VII. Adjournment:

Lou Criscuolo made a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Marc Fasano. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47pm.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:30pm in Room 2.